

AN ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR WRITING

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ABSTRACT

The student writing difficulties cannot be attributed to one factor; it includes several factors such as punctuation, structure and number of vocabularies that they can use. So there are some important elements that must be considered. To meet the goals of study, the researchers chose several topic and learners should write a composition. For this, a general topic was administered to a total 30 TOEFL students. Finally the percentage of errors on each element that we mentioned before indicates that most of the participants under investigation faced with the errors related to this study. With contrastive analysis, the researchers indicate the student's problem and introduced several effective methods to improve their writing.

KEYWORDS: Writing Difficulties, TOEFL Students, Contrastive Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Besides speaking, the other main way we communicate is through writing. Communication skills, including writing, are one of the most important transferable skills that workers possess. Most business professionals, such as marketing, finance, and research and development managers, need excellent writing skills to properly convey ideas and concepts. There are many reasons that writing skills are important in the business world. If you attend a native English speaking university you will be writing many reports, essays and term papers. Determining the type of writing you will need to do, will help you determine your topic (subject), purpose (why you are writing), style (how you should write) and tone (you're attitude toward your subject-supportive, condemning, objective, etc.)

Although the type of writing you will be doing is important, the following are certain traits that all good writing follows:

- Stimulating ideas
- Logical organization
- Engaging voice
- Original word choice
- Effective sentence style
- Correct, accurate copy

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Professor John Truscott essay in the journal Language Learning that called “The Case against

Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes.” Readers know that the learners are more or less ignorant. it was published in a major research journal and because Truscott took such a strong position ,the paper immediately got a lot of attention and was the source of commentary and controversy at conferences and in journal articles, is was one of the best article in that year.

The last two decades have witnessed a steady growth in research on academic writing because nowadays most people keep in touch with foreigners and they eager to write better .One of the most significant findings of this body of research is that “students entering academic disciplines need a specialized literacy that consists of the ability to use discipline-specific rhetorical and linguistic conventions to serve their purposes as writers” (Berkenkotter, Huckin, & Ackerman, 1991, p. 19). For this aims, Academic writing research that has examined writing in specific disciplinary courses indicates that writing serves different purposes in different courses and requires students to assume different social roles, , and student roles in writing. More specifically, academic readers approach student writing with different sets of expectations, depending on the goals of writing, the perceived roles of the student writers, and the academic readers’ own disciplinary expertise. Herrington’s studies (1985a, 1985b) in two chemical engineering courses, Laboratory and Design, showed that students assumed different social roles in their writing in the two courses and were expected to use different lines of reasoning and provide different types of evidence depending on their roles. Faigley and Hansen’s study (1985) of writing in a psychology course and a sociology course showed different reactions to student writing from readers with different degrees of disciplinary expertise and different aims for writing. Kathy’s paper, written in the psychology course, was ranked highly by the teaching assistant because of its adherence to organization, style, and format requirements of experimental reports but not by the professor, who detected problems with research design and discussion. Linda’s paper, written for both her sociology course and a writing course designed to teach writing in the social sciences, received quite different grades and feedback from the sociology professor and the English professor teaching the writing course. The sociology professor paid more attention to “what knowledge the student had acquired than in how well the report was written” (p. 147).

In the field of English for writing, a debate has centered on to what extent writing teachers should do that their students can write better. Spack (1988) argues that “English teachers cannot and should not be held responsible for teaching writing in the disciplines. The best we can accomplish is to create programs in which students can learn general inquiry strategies, rhetorical principles, and tasks that can transfer to other course work” (pp. 40–41). In the most articles that were published by other researchers, however, argue that language teachers should and can play an important role in assisting students to academic writing tasks in writing courses (e.g., Braine, 1988; Johns, 1988).

IMPORTANT POINTS

Effective Writing

A well written piece can be described as incorporating elements of writing in such away that a reader can experiences the writer’s intended meaning, understand the writer’s premise, and accept or reject the writer’s point of view.

- Effective writing is focused on the topic and does not contain extraneous or loosely related information
- Effective writing has an organizational pattern that enables the reader to follow the flow of ideas because it contains a beginning, middle, and end and uses transitional devises.
- Effective writing contains supporting ideas that are developed through the use of details.

3 Key Factors for Writing Articles

- You have got to give good use able information
- Write conversationally (write like you talk)
- Write in a way that leaves them wanting more information

The 3 Factors of Writing Concisely

- **Information Selection:** It is important to carefully select the point you are going to make
- **Vocabulary:** The advantage of having a large vocabulary in writing is obvious
- **Flow:** Developing a flowing writing style will help you write more concisely without requiring that you cut out a lot of words

METHODOLOGY

Participant

In this article, the researcher wanted to consider the intermediate student writing skill. 30 students from Islamic Azad University of Zanjan and Sadra English Institute took part in the present study.

Material

In order to figure out the possible errors of participants writing, the researcher asked student to write a composition. They should write an essay in response to a question that asked them to explain and support their opinion on an issue. They have 20 minutes to plan, write and revise their response this writing measures the student's ability to use writing to communicate in an academic environment.

In this study, the researchers chose these topics.

- If you suddenly got \$10 million, what would you spend it on?
- What are the characteristics of a good parent?
- What is your favorite movie? Use reasons and details to support your response.
- Would you like to live in a big city or a small town?

During the process of writing at first the student were free to write. The researchers just wanted them to write a composition about mentioned topic with time limitation. The time allocated to the writing was 20 minutes. Second part of this study, the researchers wanted to student make plan before writing.

The plan technique has several advantages. First of all, plan indicates that your writing's body it means that you can write your composition without delay because you have plan for writing; you know what you want to write. Secondly, it assures the students that they cans finish their composition in allocated time, so with planning before writing the students can write without time consuming. Moreover, by planning a subject to write, the student can divide the composition in to 3 part that called Introduction, Body, Conclusion.

Data Analysis

In this part of the study, the researchers Analysis the student composition errors. As the researchers mentioned before, a good writing should be clear, it means that, each of writing should have topic sentences. The main idea is usually found in the first sentences of the paragraph, this sentence is called the topic sentence. Effective topic sentences are neither too general nor too specific. Topic sentence is supported by the other sentence in the paragraph that called supporting sentences, and the other parts of this analysis is about body and conclusion that the student should write body to prove their opinion. As result if the students to finish their composition, they should have conclusion to finish their writing.

Table 1: Frequency of Different Types of Writing Factor Error

Structure	Frequency
Topic sentences	75 %
Supporting sentences	50 %
Body	95 %
Conclusion	70 %

Typically, an effective essay will contain a minimum of 150 to 225 words; the students need to demonstrate their ability to write well. This includes the development of their ideas, the organization of their essay and the quality and accuracy of language their use to express their ideas.

In this analysis, the researchers indicate the number of words the students use in their writing.

Table 2: An Effective Response will be 150 to 225 Words

No. Words	Frequency
150 - 225	40 %
100 - 150	45 %
Lower than 100	15 %

In the third table, the researchers pay attention to the structure of writing. So they analysis the percentage of using each tense.

Correct grammar is essential in a written document. The proper use of grammar gives readers a positive impression of the author, while bad grammar often has the opposite effect. Good grammar helps contribute to success in school, in the business world and the personal life of those who use it. Essays, reports and papers are often graded based on proper spelling and grammar. While a paper may contain good ideas, if poor grammar is used a lower grade is given.

Table 3: Describe Statistics for Structure

Structure		Frequency
Present	Present simple	90 %
	Present perfect	
	Present continuous	
Past	Past perfect	35 %
	Past simple	
	Past continuous	
Passive		15 %
Others		20 %

In the following table, the researchers should that how many students pay attention to the simple punctuation such as [.], [,], [;] and others.

Use a period [.] at the end of the sentences that makes a statement. There is no space between the last and period.

Use a comma [,] to separate the elements in a series, and you can use a comma to connect two independent clauses.

Use a semicolon [;] to separate closely related independent clauses. The semicolon allows the writer to imply a relationship between nicely balanced ideas without actually stating that relationship.

Table 4: Describe Statistics for Punctuation

Punctuation	Frequency
[,]	80 %
[;]	30 %
[.]	90 %

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

- As a related before, the purpose of this article is to understand the problem of EFL learners through writing skill.
- In this article, at first the students wrote a composition without planning, so their composition were not good enough but when they had plan to write, they wrote better. So this shows that had planning is playing an important role in EFL learners writing skill.
- The structure is an important factor in writing. Most of the students use present tense in their writing. Nearly most of the students did not use passive or conditional sentence. If the students use different structure in their composition, their writing would be better and shows their ability.
- A short look at the participants composing showed that the number of vocabulary that they used in their composition was not enough. So the students should improve their knowledge of vocabulary, and about punctuation. The researchers believe that most of the students have no information about punctuation a lot, but nearly all students use [.] and [,] correctly.

As a consequence if we want to write a good writing we should pay attention to following factors.

- Plan before write
- Use topic and supporting sentences
- Use punctuation correctly
- Use different structure
- Show your ability to use suitable vocabulary

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